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Senate

The Senate met at 12 noon and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. GRASSLEY).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal God, ruler of all nations. As the inauguration of President-Elect Joseph Biden approaches, bless and heal America. Bless this land of amber waves of grain with the righteousness that exalts nations. Heal this land of curvaceous mountains by removing from it sins that bring reproach to any people.

Lord, use our lawmakers as your servants of reconciliation and hope, empowering them to fulfill your purposes on Earth.

We pray in Your merciful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

LETTER OF RESIGNATION

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Chair lays before the Senate the letter

of resignation of Senator KAMALA D. HARRIS of California, which became effective at 12 noon yesterday, January 18, 2021.

Without objection, the letter is deemed read and spread upon the Journal and will be printed in the RECORD.

The letter follows:

U.S. SENATE,
January 18, 2021.

Governor GAVIN NEWSOM,
Sacramento, CA.

DEAR GOVERNOR NEWSOM: I hereby resign as Senator from the State of California, effective January 18, 2021 at 12:00 p.m. EST. As I assume my duties as Vice President of the United States, I would like to thank the people of California for the honor of serving them in the U.S. Senate over the past four years.

Sincerely,

KAMALA D. HARRIS,
U.S. Senator.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I understand that the Senate has received a message from the House of Representatives that it has taken action relative to impeachment, though it has not yet transmitted the article of impeachment to us.

I ask that pursuant to rule I of the Rules of Impeachment, the Secretary of the Senate notify the House that the Senate has received its message.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRUZ). So ordered.

The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. I ask unanimous consent to speak for 1 minute in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

IOWA

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, last week, I started my annual tradition of holding Q&A's with Iowans in all 99 counties. This is my 41st consecutive year, and remember that only one meeting counts for the tally. But I hold many Q&A's in more populous counties.

For example, I was in 10 counties last week: A snow plow manufacturer in Manchester, IA, that employs over 300 Iowans and the Marshalltown High School to hear what is on the minds of young people, because they never come to my town meetings. I heard about the pandemic, the Paycheck Protection Program, commodity prices, infrastructure, and high drug prices.

I look forward to the next 89 county meetings to keep in touch with my constituents.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

PROTESTS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, the last time the Senate convened we had just reclaimed the Capitol from violent criminals who tried to stop Congress from doing our duty.

The mob was fed lies. They were provoked by the President and other powerful people, and they tried to use fear and violence to stop a specific proceeding of the first branch of the Federal Government which they did not like.

But we pressed on. We stood together and said an angry mob would not get veto power over the rule of law in our Nation, not even for one night.

We certified the people's choice for their 46th President.

Tomorrow, President-Elect Biden and Vice President-Elect HARRIS will be sworn in. We will have a safe and successful inaugural right here on the west front of the Capitol—the space that President Bush 41 called “democracy's front porch.”

● This “bullet” symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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And then we will move forward. Our work for the American people will continue, as it has for more than 230 years. There are serious challenges that our Nation needs to continue confronting, but there will also be great and hopeful opportunities for us to seize.

Certainly, November's elections did not hand any side a mandate for sweeping ideological change. Americans elected a closely divided Senate, a closely divided House, and a Presidential candidate who said he would represent everyone.

So our marching orders from the American people are clear. We are to have a robust discussion and seek common ground. We are to pursue bipartisan agreement everywhere we can and check and balance one another respectfully where we must. And through all of this, we must always keep in mind that we are all Americans, we all love this country, and we are all in this together.

HONORING POLICE OFFICERS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Now, Mr. President, on a related matter, a great deal has already been said about the disgraceful events of January 6. More will be said in the weeks ahead.

I understand the FBI has already made at least 100 arrests, and the Justice Department reports more than 275 persons under investigation—a number that is climbing fast. I want to commend the work of the Department to swiftly investigate and bring offenders to justice.

As I have stated, January 6 saw failures of institutions, protocols, and planning. Those failures did not just leave Congress itself exposed; they also left the courageous men and women of the Capitol Police themselves in a totally untenable situation.

So today, I want to reaffirm the huge respect and gratitude that I have—and I believe all Senators have—for the men and women of the U.S. Capitol Police who put their own safety on the line every single day that they clock in and stand guard.

Neither the institution of Congress nor the American people will ever forget the bravery and the valor of Officer Brian Sicknick, who sacrificed himself to protect this place and those inside it.

We will not forget our friend Officer Howard Liebengood.

And we will never forget our debt to all the brave CP officers and their families.

It is more than just comforting to come to work in a place protected by such fine men and women, at risk to themselves. It is also very humbling.

We are also grateful to the local officers from DC, Virginia, and Maryland, to Federal law enforcement officers, the National Guard, the Secret Service, and all the other professionals who helped subdue the criminals and secure the Capitol on the 6th and are working together to protect peace and order this week.

Tomorrow, a new President and Vice President will swear their oaths of office. They will also do so safely and securely because so many brave men and women have sworn their own oaths to support and defend our Constitution.

We salute you all.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 13

Mr. MCCONNELL. Now, Mr. President, I understand there is a bill at the desk due a second reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bill by title for the second time.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 13) to establish an advisory committee to make recommendations on improvements to the security, integrity, and administration of Federal elections.

Mr. MCCONNELL. In order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to further proceeding.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection having been heard, the bill will be placed on the calendar.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, before I get into my remarks, I noted that my dear friend and colleague, the Senator from Illinois, is giving remarks to say a fond and, I am sure, a somewhat poignant farewell to Reema Dodin, who has done a great job for him, for the Senate, for Senate Democrats, and for me for decades. We are going to miss her very much. The only consolation is that she is going on to the new administration and even bigger and better things.

59TH INAUGURATION CEREMONIES

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, the Senate returns to session today for what will be a very busy and consequential period. Tomorrow, we will celebrate one of democracy's core attributes: the peaceful transfer of power, albeit under much different circumstances than most Americans are used to.

Rioters, insurrectionists, White supremacists, and domestic terrorists tried to prevent the transfer of power. They were incited by none other than the President of the United States. They have failed. Though they have

made the transition of power anything but peaceful, democracy's oldest and most revered tradition, the peaceful passing of the torch, will take place tomorrow.

We must remain vigilant. We must remain strong. If we do, democracy will always prevail. Despite what these evil terrorists tried to do, the peaceful passing of the torch will take place tomorrow as it has for generations.

In the weeks since the attack, the Nation has learned about the heroism displayed by many Capitol Police officers on January 6. I want to again thank those officers who protected Members and staff. Let us also recognize the bravery of one officer in particular, Brian Sicknick, who was killed in the line of duty.

I also want to acknowledge those members of the fourth estate for their efforts during these difficult times, for continuing to shine a light on what is happening at the Capitol, sometimes at great personal risk.

Now, in the wake of the despicable assault on the U.S. Capitol on January 6, we have taken precautions to ensure the safety of the Inauguration of President-Elect Biden tomorrow. Senate leadership has been in close and constant communication with the Secret Service, the FBI, the National Guard, and the D.C. police. As we speak, there are more troops around the Capitol than there are in Afghanistan. No force—no force—will prevent tomorrow's constitutional proceedings from taking place.

Tomorrow, Joe Biden and KAMALA HARRIS will be administered the oath of office. They will be sworn into the Presidency and Vice Presidency of the United States, and the powers vested in our Chief Executive will flow to a new office holder, a peaceful passing of the torch, as it has been for over two centuries in the grand tradition of democracy in the United States of America.

Tomorrow, the country will turn the page on the most chaotic and divisive Presidency that can ever be remembered. We will begin again the hard work of unifying and healing this Nation, defeating the pandemic, recovering our economy, and repairing our standing and stature in the world—and this is just the beginning.

BUSINESS BEFORE THE SENATE

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, the Inauguration of a new President and the start of a new administration always brings a flurry of activity to our Nation's government, but rarely—rarely—has so much piled up for the Senate as during this particular transition. Over the next several weeks, the Senate must accomplish three essential items: a second impeachment trial of Donald Trump; the confirmation of President Biden's Cabinet and other key officials; and legislation to provide much needed—almost desperately needed—COVID relief.

Again, there are three essential items of business. No. 1, as mandated